

# Transitioning Together

*A Mentor Program for First Generation Students Applying to College*

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## Class of 2021 Retreat at Brandeis University



On an icy February morning, the T<sup>2</sup> Class of 2021 arrived at school and immediately hopped on a warm bus to head over to spend the day at Brandeis University. What was upon them was our annual T<sup>2</sup> Retreat - a day dedicated to mentor/mentee bonding, exploring a college campus, and getting an introduction to the next 18 months ahead.

After arriving at the Brandeis University Welcome Center, mentees and mentors indulged in some warm donuts, fruit, and coffee, and then headed into the auditorium for inspirational welcomes from Melissa Hanenberger, Director of the T<sup>2</sup> Program, Dr. Henry Turner, NNHS Principal, Dr. David Fleishman, NPS Superintendent, and Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor of Newton. All of the welcome addresses had a similar message: being a first generation college student is something we should celebrate and that the students should make a point to use all of the resources around them. Our community leaders also made a point to thank all of the mentors for their participation in the program. The mentors are incredibly generous with their time and eager to make a difference - this program would not be possible without them!

After the welcome addresses, Taylor Barnes, Senior Assistant Director of Admissions at Brandeis University, led the group through an ice-breaker activity where mentors and mentees started the important conversations about what expectations they have about the college process, what they are concerned about and what is going to be important to them. Directly following, the students attended a very informative panel with 3 different college representatives - Mario Silva-Rosa from Bentley University, Luz Castro from Mass Bay, and Taylor Barnes from Brandeis University. The mentees were able to learn about a few different types of schools in the area, how their missions differ and how the application processes work. The mentors and mentees then went on a campus tour and ate lunch in the dining hall together. The mentees were quite impressed with all of the food options!

The afternoon included a financial aid presentation and student panel. The student panel included three current Brandeis students, all of whom are first generation college students themselves. The students told their first generation stories, how they ended up choosing Brandeis, and what sorts of things helped with making for a successful transition to college. Their advice included asking lots of questions, seeking out help when you need it, advocating for yourself, and getting involved on campus right away. I think it's safe to say that hearing about their college experiences gave our T<sup>2</sup> mentees a sense of relief that they, too, can go to college and that they are not alone. The day concluded with closing remarks from Monique Gnanaratnam, Associate Dean of Students. A huge thank you to Brandeis University for hosting us for the second year in a row. The day was very important for getting our mentor/mentee relationships off to a great start, and we are feeling really excited for what the next year and a half will bring!

### T<sup>2</sup> Team Members

- Melissa Hanenberger  
*Director &  
Mentor Coordinator*
- Brendan Amedio  
*Alumni Coordinator*
- Jennifer Geraghty  
*Mentee Coordinator*
- Jillian Hall  
*Programming Director*



Visit the T<sup>2</sup> website:  
[www.nnhst2.org](http://www.nnhst2.org)  
for our complete  
calendar of events,  
important updates,  
T<sup>2</sup> in the news,  
resources, and forms.  
**Check it out!**

## Alumni Spotlight

### Nancy Tejada, T<sup>2</sup> Class of 2015

#### Wentworth Institute of Technology, Class of 2019

**1. Tell us a little about your college experience thus far.**

I went to Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston and graduated in the summer of 2019. I majored in Construction Management with a minor in Business. I commuted to school all four years, but it wasn't that bad, and I was able to save a ton of money. I am happy to say, I am debt-free from school loans. I was able to take advantage of various opportunities. An example of this would be alternative spring break my freshman year, that year we went to San Diego and we did various volunteering activities including food banks, feed the homeless & habitat for humanities. Throughout my college time, I was able to find time to be a part of this program designed to help middle schools with their homework and increase their STEM awareness by participating in different activities every day. I guess my joy was always helping others whether it was strangers or helping my classmates with their homework or creating study groups.

**2. When you were in college, what do you wish you had known before you got there?**

Something I wish I knew before I went to college would be all different opportunities you could be involved in. There is something for everyone. To take advantage of all the scholarships available to everyone.

**3. What was it like graduating from college? How about the job search? What are you up to now?!**

So, it's been roughly 8 months since I graduated, and time has flown by so quickly. Wentworth is a great school in getting you ready for the "real world" and requires each student to do two co-ops. Co-ops are like an internship but a paid experience, which are amazing for you to get out into the industry and try out different experiences with different employers. I was fortunate to do three co-ops with three amazing companies during my time at college which I wanted to try out different job roles to determine what I liked best. I ended up taking a job offer with the last co-op I ended up doing my senior year which was with John Moriarty & Associates as an assistant project engineer. I am currently working on a Hotel in the Seaport where I have been for the past year and half.

**4. Is there anything you would do differently?**

Something that I would do differently is to join more clubs at the beginning of college and not being afraid to join where I knew no one. Another thing would be to pay attention to scholarship due dates and not procrastinate on getting those in on time. The last thing would be to enjoy college more and work a bit less. Time flies by very quickly you need to enjoy the college experience more.

**5. Was there a piece of advice (or specific experience) you remember from either your mentor or T<sup>2</sup> experience that has had a big impact on your transition to college?**

The biggest impact in getting me to college would be all those amazing people at Newton North such as Ms. Hanenberger who is the absolute best who helped me realize that there are other majors than just the traditional ones that we all think of. Another person who helped me tremendously is my mentor Sue Shepherd who took me to visit colleges and spent hours/days with helping me get ready for the SATS and getting my college application sent in. This was very overwhelming since no one in my family went to college or could help me with the process. Both these people help me so much with the college process and I am thankful for having them.

**6. Is there anything else you wish we had talked about at our T<sup>2</sup> meetings? Anything else you wish your mentor had said/done?**

I don't think there was anything else my mentor could have done, she was amazing. She took me to visit colleges and helped a ton with the college process. I think something beneficial for everyone would be additional information on scholarships and plan more group college visits.

**7. What would you tell students thinking about being in Transitioning Together about the program?**

Don't be afraid to ask for help or ask questions. Set a date for yourself when you want to finish the college application by and make yourself accountable to do it by then.

**8. What suggestions do you have for students about to start the college application process?**

Good luck and don't procrastinate!!! Enjoy your time as it goes by very quickly.



## Alumni Breakfast

Back on January 7, the T<sup>2</sup> team hosted its annual Alumni Breakfast! After hearing feedback from many alumni, we made the decision to change the date to after the holidays, during a less busy time, to allow more opportunity for alumni to attend. Alums stopped by the North cafeteria and shared what they have been up to and the happenings on their college campuses with the current T<sup>2</sup> seniors and the T<sup>2</sup> team! Great conversations were had and a delicious breakfast was devoured by all! To stay up-to-date with the current happenings of T<sup>2</sup> and all things alumni, please follow our new LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12391553/>





**Welcome Class of 2021!**

On January 16th, we welcomed the Transitioning Together Class of 2021. Twenty-nine mentees and their families met with their new mentors who will be working with them for the next 18 months. The T<sup>2</sup> Team spoke about the history of the program, the timeline, and expectations for this fantastic opportunity these students have before them.



Here are the demographics for our newest class:

- 100% (29 mentees) First Generation in their family to attend a traditional 4 year college in the United States
- 38% (11 mentees) English Language Learners (ELL) or former ELL (FLEP)
- 45% (13 mentees) receive Free or Reduced Lunch
- 34% (10 mentees) live with a single parent or guardian
- 10% (3 mentees) live with someone other than either of their biological parents
- 10% (3 mentees) in METCO
- 17% (5 mentees) in NNHS Dover Legacy Scholars (DLS)



**T<sup>2</sup>'s First Posse Scholar**

Congratulations to Alana King who will be attending Denison University next fall on a full-ride Posse scholarship! Alana applied to the national Posse program last fall. The Posse model is rooted in the belief that “a small, diverse group of talented students can serve as a catalyst for individual and community development” per the Posse website. This program strives to have the United States’ growing diversity reflected on college campuses. With support from Posse, scholars excel at school, participate in internships, and earn prestigious awards.

Posse has a rigorous nomination process. In the fall of students’ senior year, there are three sets of interviews with many qualified candidates. Alana talked about how difficult this process: “Throughout most of the process, I convinced myself that I was not going to get the scholarship in order to ease my anxiety; however, Sara, my parents, and family always believed in me and my abilities to become a Posse Scholar.” After a long nomination process, Posse then has a Pre-College Training program. Alana told us, “Posse requires its students to go through seven months of Pre-Collegiate Training (PCT). During PCT, the posses and their trainers meet weekly to discuss, learn, and build a bond that will be strengthened on their respective campuses in the fall.”

Alana was accepted to Denison University in Granville, Ohio where she will receive a scholarship that covers her tuition and room and board for all four years! Alana knew Denison was the best fit for her because of “their extensive STEM resources that they provide students and their strong sense of community, two things that are very important to me.” We are excited to see all that Alana accomplishes at Denison!

**Alana King**  
**T<sup>2</sup> Class of 2020**  
**Posse Scholar**  
**Denison University,**  
**Class of 2024 with**  
**Principal Turner**

## Transitioning Together Class of 2020

### Colleges where T<sup>2</sup> mentees have been accepted this year:

- Adelphi University
- Anna Maria College
- Babson College
- Bay State College
- Bentley University
- Binghamton University
- Boston College
- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- Bridgewater State University
- Bryant University
- California College of the Arts
- Case Western Reserve University
- Clark Atlanta University
- Clark University
- College of the Holy Cross
- Columbus College of Art & Design
- Connecticut College
- Curry College
- Dean College
- Denison University
- Deaul University
- Dominican College
- Drexel University
- Emerson College
- Emmanuel College
- Fisher College
- Fitchburg State University
- Framingham State University
- Franklin Pierce University
- George Mason University
- George Washington University
- Gordon College
- Hampton University
- Harvard University
- Hobart William Smith Colleges
- Howard University
- Ithaca College
- Johnson & Wales University
- Lasell University
- Lesley University
- Louisiana State University
- Lynn University
- Manhattanville College
- Mass Bay Community College
- Mass College of Art & Design
- MCPHS
- Merrimack College
- Monserrat College of Art
- Muhlenberg College
- New England College
- Northeastern University
- Otis College of Art
- Pace University
- Pennsylvania State University
- Providence College
- Quinnipiac University
- Regis College
- Rhode Island College
- Ringling College of Art
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- Roger Williams University
- Rutgers University
- Salem State University
- Seattle University
- Simmons College
- Saint Joseph's University
- St. John's University (NY)
- Stonehill College
- Stony Brook University
- Suffolk University
- Tufts University
- University of Alabama
- University of Arizona
- University of Bridgeport
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Irvine
- University of California, LA
- University of California, SB
- University of California, SD
- University of Connecticut
- University of Hartford
- University of Louisville
- University of Maine, Orono
- UMASS Amherst
- UMASS Boston
- UMASS Dartmouth
- UMASS Lowell
- University of Miami
- University of Michigan
- University of New Hampshire
- University of New Haven
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Rhode Island
- University of Southern CA
- University of Southern Maine
- University of Tampa
- University of Vermont
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Wesleyan University
- Western New England University
- Westfield State University
- Wheaton College
- Whittier College
- Woodbury University
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- Xavier University

### By The Numbers

# of Mentees = 37

% Accepted to College = 100%

Accepted to 4 year College = 35

Accepted to 2 year College = 9

Awarded Merit Aid = 26

Total Merit Aid Awarded to T<sup>2</sup>

Mentees = \$1,857,972

Average Merit Aid = \$71,460

Total # of Applications = 343

Average # of Applications = 9

# of College Acceptances = 217

Average # of Acceptances = 6

Average Acceptance Rate = 63%

*The above figures are as of May 1, 2020.*

*“I really wouldn't have gotten that far in the college application process without the help of Transitioning Together, especially the help from my mentor.”*

- Class of 2020

T<sup>2</sup> mentee

Transitioning Together  
www.nnhst2.org  
Newton North High School  
457 Walnut Street  
Newtonville, MA 02460  
617-559-6347